

Kärcher Selects Esker to Automate Sales Order Processing and Standardise Customer Service

Sydney, Australia – January 31, 2012 – Esker, a foremost authority in document process automation solutions, today announced the signing of a contract with Kärcher North America — a global leader in the production of consumer, commercial, and industrial cleaning equipment — to centralise customer service functionalities and automate fax processes with a single, cloud-based solution.

Of the 450 sales orders received daily — across all of Kärcher’s 12 distinguished product brands and seven North American locations — nearly 90 percent of them come in via fax. Since each fax is manually processed, and all Kärcher brands have independent customer service organisations, the visibility, efficiency and confidence in their paper-based method was low. In an effort to improve processes, optimise staff and simplify the customer service landscape, Kärcher sought a hosted solution that could easily integrate with their current SAP® system.

Process inefficiency

“Our current process was unsustainable,” said Jeff Fithian, Senior Director of IT at Kärcher. “Currently, faxes have to be printed, picked up, walked around, placed on desks and manually entered into SAP. If a fax image needs to be retrieved at a later time by our customer service team, depending on how it was scanned and stored, it can be very difficult and sometimes impossible to retrieve.” Kärcher pursued a system that would allow their staff to easily access the original fax image without installing new servers or software, as well as bypass the large volume of non-value work that customer service was performing.

Searching for solutions

In searching for the right solution, Kärcher was presented with a number of options. “We looked into different vendors and even considered doing it in-house using e-fax/Microsoft Outlook and managing it that way,” said Fithian. “One day, someone forwarded me an email promoting an Esker webinar — I attended — and the rest is history. Esker had more experience with SAP and had exactly what we were looking for in terms of an ‘out of the box’ solution that didn’t require a lot of extra customisation on our end.”

Projected benefits

Upon implementation of the Esker solution, Kärcher will be able to link URLs of faxed images directly on the Esker platform into SAP, where customer service staff can click on the link in SAP and open the document. Jeff Fithian expects to see significant productivity benefits, primarily revolving around the efficiency of the customer service team.

“We currently have a large, geographically dispersed customer support team supporting our multiple brands. This causes inefficiencies in our customer service operations as we do not have the flexibility and tools in place to support our growing business without adding additional headcount,” said Fithian. “After going live with Esker, we are targeting a 30 percent productivity improvement for our customer service team. This will allow us to grow our business without adding additional headcount, and to reallocate some of our higher skilled customer service personnel to more high-value activities that better serve the customer instead of dedicating a significant portion of their time to data entry.”

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Future plans

Kärcher has a two to three year goal to leverage the Esker solution for more savings and process improvements throughout the company. Fithian went on to say, "Once we get stable with this first phase of the Esker solution, we plan to pursue further automation of the order entry process, customer invoicing and Mail on Demand. There is significant potential for us with this technology and we intend to get as much out of it as we can."

About Kärcher

A world leader in the production of hot and cold water pressure washers, Kärcher North America's extensive line includes over 100 different industrial and commercial pressure washers. Its commercial and industrial grade floor cleaning equipment features innovative cleaning solutions from brands you've grown to trust. Kärcher North America's wash-water treatment and dry ice cleaning systems provide unique cleaning alternatives in a variety of applications. Headquartered in Englewood, Colorado, the world-class Kärcher North America Excellence Centre is located on the campus of our Englewood, Colorado manufacturing facility. For more information, visit www.karcherna.com.

About Esker

Esker is the worldwide leader in document process automation solutions. Addressing all types of business processes from accounts payable and accounts receivable to sales order processing and procurement, Esker cloud computing solutions enable companies to automate the reception, processing and sending of any business document with one platform. Esker helps over 80,000 companies across the world to reduce the use of paper and eliminate manual processes while improving their productivity, efficiency and environmental impact.

Esker has global headquarters in Lyon, France, U.S. headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin and ANZ headquarters in Sydney since 1997. Over 1,800 companies in Australia and New Zealand rely on Esker solutions to run their business.

For more information, visit www.esker.com.au, follow us at twitter.com/eskerinc and read our blog on www.quitpaper.com.

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